

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8960

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PORG, EAIR, ICAO

SUBJECT: ICAO DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON REVISION OF HAGUE PROTOCOL
TO WARSAW CONVENTION

REF: A. STATE 126571 B. LONDON 9541

JOHANNESBURG FOR FRANK WILLIS

1. OBSTRUCTIONIST ATTITUDE OF SOVIET DELEGATION AT APRIL ICAO
LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING REGARDING US INITIATIVES ON GOLD
CLAUSE QUESTION IS NOT SURPRISING. DETACHMENT OF LIABILITY
LIMITS AS EXPRESSED IN GOLD FROM EITHER HAGUE OR GUATEMELA
PROTOCOLS WOULD TEND, IN SOVIET EYES, TO DIMINISH THE ROLE OF GOLD
AS AN INTERNATIONAL STANDARD OF ACCOUNT. FOR VARIETY OF REASONS,
SOVIETS ARE INTERESTED IN PRECISELY THE OPPOSITE: IN ENHANCING
THE ROLE OF GOLD, HENCE ITS DESIRABILITY AND, ULTIMATELY, VALUE.
(THIS RELATES ALSO TO FACT THAT USSR AS ONE OF WORLD'S LARGEST
GOLD PRODUCERS HAS OBVIOUS VESTED INTEREST IN SUSTAINING HIGH
VALUE FOR GOLD.)

2. ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS IN RECENT PAST DURING BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS
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SOVIETS HAVE INDICATED THINLY-MASKED DISDAIN FOR SDRS, WHICH

THEY VIEW AT BEST AS STOP-GAP MEASURE TO DELAY FURTHER "DEEPEING OF CRISIS" IN WESTERN COUTRIES' FINANCIAL/MONETARY INTERRELATIONSHIPS. SOVIETS DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE PARTICULARLY SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF SDR ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL MONETARY SYSTEM, AND WHAT UNDERSTANDING THEY DO HAVE IS COLORED BY IDEOLOGIVAL HOSITLITY.

3. IN SUM, IT APPEARS DOUBTFUL TO EMBASSY THAT USSR CAN BE INDUCED TO ADOPT POSITION OF NEUTRALITY AT SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE REGARDING US THREE-POINT PROPOSAL. WHILE EMBASSY WILL BE COURSE BE READY TO ELABORATE US PROPOSAL IN DISCUSSIONS WITH APPROPRIATE SOVIET OFFICIALS IF DEPARTMENT WISHES, WE BELIEVE WISEST COURSE FOR MOMENT WOULD BE TO REFRAIN FROM RAISING THIS ISSUE IN BILATERAL FRAMEWORK, WHERE FURTHER DISCUSSION SEEMS CERTAIN TO HAVE EFFECT OF LOCKING SOVIETS STILL FURTHER INTO NEGATIVE POSITION AND MAY PUSH THEM INTO MORE ACTIVE EFFORT TO ORGANIZE SUPPORT FOR THEIR VIEWS. IF DEPARTMENT PRECEIVES THAT DURING CONFERENCE ITSELF SOVIETS COULD WELL FIND THEMSELVES OUTGUNNED BY SUPPORT FOR US PROPOSITON FROM OTHER DELEGATIONS, OUR JUDGMENT WOULD BE THAT IN THIS INSTANCE US INTEREST WOULD BENEFIT MOST FROM LETTING NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE.
STOESSEL

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